

## RAISE WAGES, NOT WALLS

**HON. CHARLES B. RANGEL**

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Friday, July 28, 2006*

Mr. RANGEL. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to submit to the RECORD an opinion editorial from the July 25, New York Times entitled "Raise Wages, Not Walls" by former Governor and Democratic Presidential candidate Michael S. Dukakis and Daniel J.B. Mitchell in which the columnists openly criticize the current two primary policy approaches to illegal immigration, one being the erection of a wall along the Mexican border and the other being a temporary workers program. The apparent inefficiencies and problems inherent in both approaches have helped confirm that the raising of the minimum wage is the best and most efficient alternative.

It is a mistake to assume that the erection and maintenance of a wall will ever stop the influx of immigrants across American borders. Walls rarely work. Spending billions to erect something akin to the Berlin Wall is simply unnecessary, especially at a time when millions of Americans are unemployed. The approach by the Senate is also not very realistic. It created the temporary workers program, but requires employers first to attempt to recruit Americans to fill job openings. Also, its success is dependent on the creation and distribution of a costly national identification card. The cost for producing such a card for the 150 million people currently in the labor force—and the millions more who will seek work in the near future—extends to billions of dollars.

The time to raise the minimum wage is now. More States are raising their minimum wages, pushing hourly rates above \$8 in some and shrinking the role of the Federal minimum wage, which hasn't gone up since 1997. It is difficult for Americans to work and sustain themselves with this wage. For full-time work, it doesn't even come close to the poverty line for an individual, let alone provide a family with a living wage. As a result, many immigrants are filling in the gaps left over by Americans, often working for minimum and sub-minimum earnings.

The minimum wage has already proven helpful to former welfare recipients who are entering the workforce. A study of a 1999 State minimum wage increase in Oregon found that as many as one-half of the welfare recipients entering the workforce in 1998 were likely to have received a raise due to the increase. After the increase, the real hourly starting wages for former welfare recipients rose to \$7.23.

If we want to reduce illegal immigration, we must reduce the number of low paying jobs that fuels it. By raising the minimum wage, more Americans would be more willing to work in what is currently considered low paying jobs, denying them to people who aren't supposed to be here in the first place.

I enter into the RECORD the New York Times opinion editorial written by Governor Michael S. Dukakis and Daniel J.B. Mitchell and commend them for including raising minimum wage to the contentious debate concerning how to approach illegal immigration. I believe raising the minimum wage is by far a more effective way to deal with illegal immigration.

[From the New York Times, July 25, 2006]

## RAISE WAGES, NOT WALLS

(By Michael S. Dukakis and Daniel J. B. Mitchell)

There are two approaches to illegal immigration currently being debated in Congress. One, supported by the House, emphasizes border control and law enforcement, including a wall along the Mexican border and increased border patrols. The other, which is supported by the Bush administration and has been passed by the Senate, relies on employers to police the workplace. Both proposals have serious flaws.

As opponents of the House plan have rightly pointed out, walls rarely work; illegal immigrants will get around them one way or another. Unless we erect something akin to the Berlin Wall, which would cost billions to build and police, a barrier on the border would be monitored by largely symbolic patrols and easily evaded.

The Senate approach is more realistic but it, too, has problems. It creates a temporary worker program but requires employers first to attempt to recruit American workers to fill job openings. It allows for more border fencing, but makes no effort to disguise the basic futility of the enterprise. Instead, it calls on employers to enforce immigration laws in the workplace, a plan that can only succeed through the creation and distribution of a costly national identification card.

A national ID card raises serious questions about civil liberties, but they are not the sole concern. The cost estimates for producing and distributing a counterfeit-proof card for the roughly 150 million people currently in the labor force—and the millions more who will seek work in the near future—extend into the billions of dollars. Employers would have to verify the identity of every American worker, otherwise the program would be as unreliable as the one in place now. Anyone erroneously denied a card in this bureaucratic labyrinth would be unemployed.

There is a simpler alternative. If we are really serious about turning back the tide of illegal immigration, we should start by raising the minimum wage from \$5.15 per hour to something closer to \$8. The Massachusetts legislature recently voted to raise the state minimum to \$8 and California may soon set its minimum even higher. Once the minimum wage has been significantly increased, we can begin vigorously enforcing the wage law and other basic labor standards.

Millions of illegal immigrants work for minimum and even sub-minimum wages in workplaces that don't come close to meeting health and safety standards. It is nonsense to say, as President Bush did recently, that these jobs are filled by illegal immigrants because Americans won't do them. Before we had mass illegal immigration in this country, hotel beds were made, office floors were cleaned, restaurant dishes were washed and crops were picked—by Americans.

Americans will work at jobs that are risky, dirty or unpleasant so long as they provide decent wages and working conditions, especially if employers also provide health insurance. Plenty of Americans now work in such jobs, from mining coal to picking up garbage. The difference is they are paid a decent wage and provided benefits for their labor.

However, Americans won't work for peanuts, and these days the national minimum wage is less than peanuts. For full-time work, it doesn't even come close to the poverty line for an individual, let alone provide a family with a living wage. It hasn't been raised since 1997 and isn't enforced even at its currently ridiculous level.

Yet enforcing the minimum wage doesn't require walling off a porous border or trying

to distinguish yesterday's illegal immigrant from tomorrow's "guest worker." All it takes is a willingness by the federal government to inspect workplaces to determine which employers obey the law.

Curiously, most members of Congress who take a hard line on immigration also strongly oppose increasing the minimum wage, claiming it will hurt businesses and reduce jobs. For some reason, they don't seem eager to acknowledge that many of the jobs they claim to hold dear are held by the same illegal immigrants they are trying to deport.

But if we want to reduce illegal immigration, it makes sense to reduce the abundance of extremely low-paying jobs that fuels it. If we raise the minimum wage, it's possible some low-end jobs may be lost; but more Americans would also be willing to work in such jobs, thereby denying them to people who aren't supposed to be here in the first place. And tough enforcement of wage rules would curtail the growth of an underground economy in which both illegal immigration and employer abuses thrive.

Raising the minimum wage and increasing enforcement would prove far more effective and less costly than either proposal currently under consideration in Congress. If Congress would only remove its blinders about the minimum wage, it may see a plan to deal effectively with illegal immigration, too.

## IN HONOR OF FRANCIS ALFONSE IANNI

**HON. MICHAEL N. CASTLE**

OF DELAWARE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Friday, July 28, 2006*

Mr. CASTLE. Mr. Speaker, it is with great pleasure that I rise today to pay tribute to Francis Alfonse Ianni, who is celebrating his 75th birthday this month. Throughout his life he has worked to protect and enhance the well being of the Delaware community and I join so many others in expressing thanks.

Frank began to serve his country at the early age of 13, enlisting in the Delaware State Guard in 1945. He quickly rose to the rank of Sergeant and transferred to the Delaware National Guard, where he served as a Staff Sergeant. He attended Valley Forge Military Academy and was designated as a distinguished, military graduate. In 1954 he graduated from the U.S. Military Academy at West Point and was commissioned a 2nd Lieutenant to the 82nd Airborne division. Overseas, he served in Greenland, West Germany, and two tours in Vietnam. Upon his return, he continued to serve in the army as a Special Assistant for the National Security Council Affairs, and later, in the Office of the Secretary of Defense. In 1977, he went on to become the Adjunct General of the Delaware National Guard.

His dedication to protecting others transcends well beyond his military service. In 1981 he retired from the Delaware National Guard and accepted the position of Director of the Delaware Office of Highway Safety. While holding this position he was responsible for numerous significant advances in protecting our community, including: the Driving Under the Influence Law, Seat Belt Law, and Child Safety Seat Law. He also initiated the first sobriety checkpoints throughout Delaware, and was responsible for the first Alcohol Awareness Programs conducted around the holidays.

Even after leaving the Office of Highway Safety, Frank continued to be an active and benevolent member of the Delaware community. He taught as an Adjunct Professor at Goldey-Beacom College in Wilmington, teaching courses in business and political science until his retirement in 2000. He has also served on numerous boards including the Delaware Blood Bank and the Delmarva Chapter of the American Red Cross. I congratulate and thank him for his valuable contributions and exemplary record of service on behalf of the State of Delaware. Thank you, for all you have done and continue to do for the people of our State.

INTRODUCTION OF THE "INTEGRITY AND ACCOUNTABILITY IN ADMINISTRATION PARDONS ACT OF 2006"

**HON. JOHN CONYERS, JR.**

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Friday, July 28, 2006*

Mr. CONYERS. Mr. Speaker, today, along with several of my colleagues, I am introducing legislation that would require the president to notify Congress upon the pardon of any Executive Branch employee. This notification is necessary because it is possible that the president could pardon an employee of his administration as a means of preventing an investigation from running its course and, perhaps, uncovering information critical of the administration. Without limiting the president's pardon authority under Article II of the Constitution, it is important for purposes of public accountability that Congress and the American public be notified when he does pardon one of his own employees.

The need for this legislation came to light as a result of the Justice Department's investigation into an administration official's leak of CIA officer Valerie Plame Wilson's identity. The indictment of I. Lewis Libby, who was the Vice President's Chief of Staff, for false statements, perjury, and obstruction of justice in connection with the investigation raised concerns that the President might use his authority to pardon Mr. Libby or other officials involved in serious criminal offenses. This is a concern because President George W. Bush refused to respond to a July 25, 2005 letter I sent seeking his assurance that he would not pardon any former or current officials involved in the leak of Valerie Plame Wilson's name. Also, a June 18, 2006 article by Tom Brune of Newsday notes that the Bush White House may gain political advantage by pardoning Mr. Libby.

This is why Congress and the American people should be informed if and when a president pardons an administration employee. The notice should include information that sets forth the complete picture surrounding the pardon. This would include: the name and government title of the person, nature of the offense, the date of the pardon, the effect of the pardon on any criminal sentence or fine that may have been imposed, whether the person was involved in any criminal or civil investigation, whether the president sought the opinion of the lead Federal investigator on whether a pardon should be granted, and the position of the lead Federal investigator on whether a pardon should be granted.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

**HON. LORETTA SANCHEZ**

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Friday, July 28, 2006*

Ms. LORETTA SANCHEZ of California. Mr. Speaker, on Monday, July 24, 2006, I was unavoidably detained due to a prior obligation.

Had I been present and voting, I would have voted as follows: Rollcall No. 394: "yes" (S. 1496); Rollcall No. 395: "yes" (S. 203); and Rollcall No. 396: "yes" (H.R. 5534).

PAYING TRIBUTE TO BOB FISHER

**HON. JON C. PORTER**

OF NEVADA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Friday, July 28, 2006*

Mr. PORTER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor my good friend Bob Fisher, who will begin his 13th year as President and CEO of the Nevada Broadcasters Association in August of this year.

Bob has been the driving force behind recording oral history video interviews with Nevada's pioneer radio and television broadcasters to be preserved for future generations. For the past 12 years, Bob has hosted a weekly public affairs radio program called "Observations" that airs on 17 stations. In addition, he has hosted a weekly public affairs television program, also named "Observations", that airs on four Northern Nevada stations. "Observations" is Nevada's most listened-to public affairs radio program.

Over the course of his long and distinguished career as a broadcaster, Bob has earned a number of accolades. He has earned three American Advertising Federation ADDY Awards for his broadcasting work, as well as Electronic Media Awards in 2000, 2001, and 2002.

Bob's service to the community extends beyond radio and television broadcasts. Currently, Bob serves as the State Coordinator and Chairman of the Nevada AMBER Alert Review Committee. He is a member of the Nevada Homeland Security Commission and serves as Rural Taskforce Chairman. He is also a member of the Nevada BRAC Commission, and a former President of the National Alliance of State Broadcasters Associations (NASBA). Furthermore, Bob is a former member of the Board of Trustees of the Las Vegas Chamber of Commerce.

Mr. Speaker, I am proud to honor my friend Bob Fisher. Bob has been a tireless advocate for the broadcasters in the State of Nevada and has built a very respectable relationship between the broadcasters and our State and Federal Governments. I wish him the best as he continues his leadership of the Nevada Broadcasters Association.

CONCERNS WITH VIOLATIONS OF NORMAL COMMERCIAL RIGHTS AND OBLIGATIONS BY GAZPROM AND RUSSIA

**HON. KAY GRANGER**

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Friday, July 28, 2006*

Ms. GRANGER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to submit to the RECORD an article titled "Texas Energy Concern, Assailing Big Russian and German Providers, Talks of Lawsuits" from the May 19 edition of the New York Times. The article, by Paul Meller, describes a situation impacting an important business in the 12th district of Texas.

Since 1997, Moncrief Oil International, Inc. of Ft. Worth, Texas, has held a significant contractual interest in the development of the Siberian Yuzhno-Russkoye gas field owned by Gazprom, Russia's state-owned gas monopoly. Despite Moncrief Oil's well-documented claim, Gazprom is now in the process of transferring mineral assets to European firms that infringe upon the U.S. company's commercial rights and interests.

I am concerned about this apparent violation. It is my hope that Gazprom and Russia will honor and enforce all contractual obligations relating to its strategic minerals industries.

[From the New York Times, May 19, 2006]

TEXAS ENERGY CONCERN, ASSAILING BIG RUSSIAN AND GERMAN PROVIDERS, TALKS OF LAWSUIT

(By Paul Meller)

BRUSSELS, May 18.—An American-based energy company, Moncrief Oil International, is threatening to sue two German companies, contending that an agreement they signed with the Russian giant Gazprom interfered with Moncrief's existing contracts to develop natural gas fields in western Siberia.

Moncrief—a privately owned, family-founded business in Fort Worth—has sent letters to the German companies, E.On and Wintershall, a gas-distribution unit of the German chemical group BASF, informing them of its plans to take legal action in the German courts, Moncrief's president, Jeffrey Miller, said Thursday in a telephone interview.

The threat of the suit in a German court is the latest twist in Moncrief's efforts to get Gazprom to comply with an agreement in 1997 that gave it a 40 percent stake in the Yuzhno-Russkoye field.

Moncrief contends that Gazprom has ignored the agreement and is selling stakes in the natural gas field to other companies, including the 40 percent stake Moncrief says it owns.

In a statement issued after the letter to Wintershall was sent, the company's chairman, Richard W. Moncrief, said, "While Moncrief has delivered on its side of the deal, Gazprom has not honored its signed agreement with Moncrief, instead choosing to sell a stake in the field to BASF, and perhaps E.On."

Late last month, Gazprom signed an agreement that gave Wintershall a 35 percent stake in the Yuzhno-Russkoye field in return for an increased stake in Wings, a joint venture involving Gazprom and BASF.

Gazprom currently owns 35 percent of the joint venture. But under the agreement signed last month in the Siberian city of Tomsk and witnessed by President Vladimir V. Putin of Russia and Chancellor Angela